

Minutes August 21, 2008 **Facilitation of Community Choices Committee**

The Committee met in the Town Room, Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 9:05

Members Present: Stan Gawle, Joan Golowich, Isaac Ben-Ezra, Gerald Jolly, Irvin Rhodes and Katherine Vorwerk-Feldman : Bob Saul, Richard Spurgin and Alison Donta- Venman joined the meeting via conference phone .

Members Absent : Martha Hanner

Others Present : Stephanie O’Keeffe, Helen Vivian, Andy Churchill, Larry Schaffer and Andy Steinberg.

Minutes of August 7,2008: Isaac Ben-Ezra requested that the draft minutes be deferred until the next meeting in order to integrate the revised minutes that Martha Hanner had also drafted with his draft.

Minutes of August 14,2008: Katherine Vorwerk-Feldman suggested that on page 2 of the draft minutes, after Public Forum, strike the word one and insert in its place “At least two”.

On a motion by Katherine Vorwerk-Feldman and a second by Joan Golowich , the minutes of the August 14,2008 meeting were approved as amended.

Katherine Vorwerk-Feldman reminded the committee that sub-committee minutes should also be kept also to comply with the open meeting law. John Musante suggested that all minutes be included as an appendix to our report and be available at our website mid-September.

Election of Committee Secretary: On a motion by Isaac Ben-Ezra and a second by Richard Spurgin, Stan Gawle was elected Secretary.

Announcement: After consulting with ACTV, Bob Saul reported that the first presentation meeting would be held in the Town Room at 7PM on October 2, 2008.

Scenario presentations: Bob Saul suggested that the committee only present three scenarios rather than 5 scenarios: level funding, level services and minimal enhancements. A question was raised by Andy Churchill as to whether level services implied a re-prioritization or do we fund what we have now?

After considerable discussion, the committee voted unanimously on a motion made by Bob Saul and seconded by Richard Spurgin ,to present three scenarios; level funding, level services and a moderately augmented enhanced services.

Outreach Committee Report: Bob Saul will be interviewed next week and focus on our committee’s mission. In addition, a one minute Public Service Announcement (PSA) will be developed and will focus on when and where community presentation meetings will be held. Isaac Ben-Ezra asked if the committee meetings should be televised. Stan Gawle said that we had agreed to do that when we met at the police station and that Larry Schaffer had agreed to make the official request with ACTV.

Presentation Committee Report: Alison Donta-Venman reported that the committee had reviewed materials and slides and would be meeting next week to cull out some of the slides. A presentation will be made at next week's committee meeting.

A request was made to the schools to provide a list of specific cuts that would result in a level funded scenario. Helen Vivian and Andy Churchill responded that they would be willing to provide areas of cuts, but not specific.

Economic Development Status Report: Larry Schaffer reported that his staff's goal is to increase commercial development by \$20 m a year for the next ten years.

Zoning changes recently passed by the Town have resulted in the following projects; Lord Jeff renovations which are now estimated \$20m; and New England Environmental 's plans to begin one of two possible buildings which would cost \$2m to build and yield \$64,000 in annual revenue.

Veridian Village has a potential cost of \$70m for between 135-140 units but is currently on hold due to the economics.

Negotiations are underway in North Amherst to secure an options on 6 parcels for a research park that at a minimum would have 250,000 sq.foot building This project would be long term but could possibly yield a \$100m in new valuations.

Atkins Corner development and additional commercial buildings on Spring St. would add additional revenues.

Stan Gawle questioned whether the value of the Lord Jeff renovations would produce a valuation base of \$20m. Commercial property is mainly valued by income since it seldom changes hands and fair market value is difficult to assess. Mr, Schaffer then stated that he was confident that the renovations should increase the taxes to an amount equivalent to \$10m in new valuations.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.